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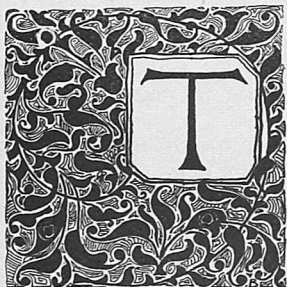
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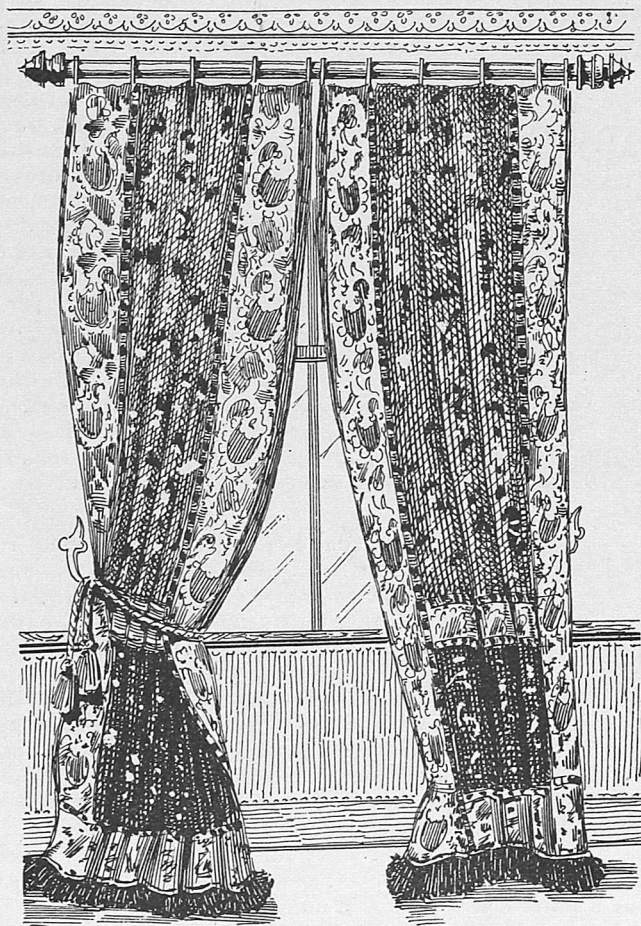


## EMBROIDERY.

BY MAY MORRIS.



THE technicalities of embroidery are very simple, and its tools few—practically consisting of a needle, and nothing else. The work can be wrought loose in the hand, or stretched in a frame, which latter mode is often advisable, always when smooth and minute work is aimed at. There are no mysteries of method, beyond a few elementary rules that can be quickly learnt; no way to perfection except that of care and patience and love of the work itself. This being so, the more is demanded from *design* and *execution*; we want also complete triumph over the limitations of process and material, and what is equally important, suitability of purpose. The latitude allowed to the worker; the lavishness and ingenuity displayed in the stitches employed; in short the expression of the workers' individuality, form a great part of the success of needlework.



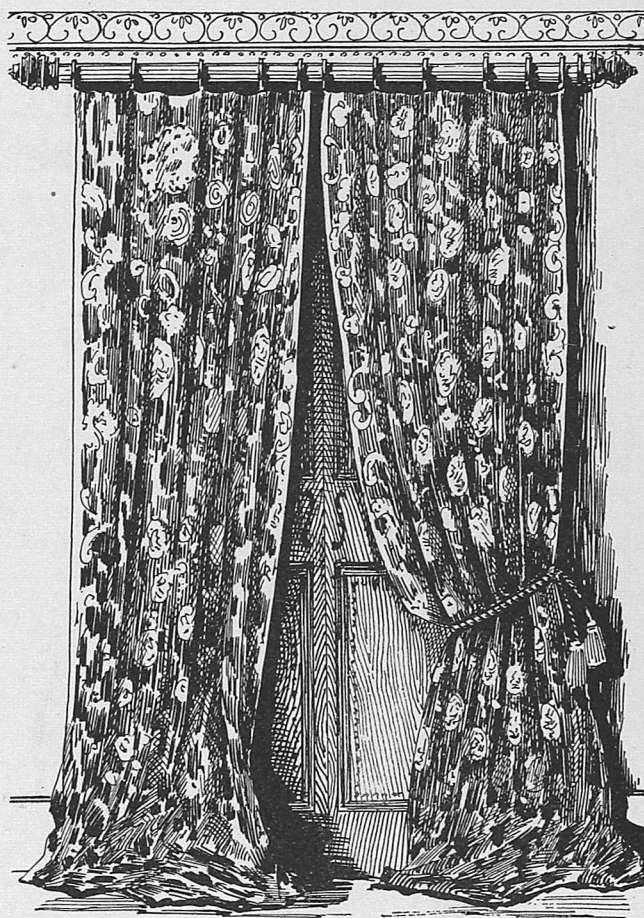
SIMPLE WINDOW DRAPERY.

The varieties of stitch are too many to be described closely without diagrams, but the chief are as follows:

*Chain-stitch* consists of loops simulating the links of a simple chain. Some of the most famous work of the middle ages was

worked in this stitch, which is enduring, and of its nature necessitates careful execution. We are more familiar with it in the dainty work of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in the airy brightness and simplicity of which lies a peculiar charm, contrasted with the more pompous and pretentious work of the same period. This stitch is also wrought with a hook on any loose material stretched on a *tambour* frame.

*Tapestry stitch* consists of stitches laid one beside another, and gives a surface slightly resembling that of tapestry. I give the name, as it is so often used, but it is vague and leads to the confusion that exists in people's minds between loom tapestry and embroidery. The stitch is particularly suitable for the drapery of figures and anything that requires a slight amount of shading or "painting."



SIMPLE DOOR DRAPERY.

*Applique* has been and is still a favorite method of work, which Vasari says Botticelli praised as being very suitable to processional banners and hangings used in the open air, as it is solid and enduring, also bold and effective in style. It consists of designs embroidered on a stout ground, and then cut out and laid on silk or velvet, and edged round with lines of gold or silk, and sometimes with pearls. It requires considerable deftness and judgment in applying, as the work could well be spoilt by clumsy and heavy finishing. It is now looked upon as solely ecclesiastical, I believe, and is associated in our minds with garish red and gold and white. Another form of applied work is done by laying down gold threads or silken ones directly on the silk or linen ground work to be decorated; the effect of this tracery, with a little closer work here and there, is very delicate.



*Couching* is an effective method of work, in which broad masses of silk or gold thread are laid down and secured by a network or diaper of crossing threads, through which the under surface shines very prettily. Of this work there are as many varieties as the worker has invention for.

*Patchwork.* The ingenious coverlets of our grandmothers, formed of scraps of old gowns pieced together in a certain symmetrical form, constitute the romance of a family history, but this method has an older origin than would be imagined. Queen Isis Kheb's embalmed body went down the Nile to its burial place under a canopy that was lately discovered, and is preserved in the Boulak Museum. It consists of many squares of gazelle hide of different colors sewn together and ornamented with various devices. Under the name of patchwork or mosaic-like piecing together of different colored stuffs, comes also the Persian work made at Resht. Bits of fine cloth are cut out for leaves, flowers and so forth, and neatly stitched together with great accuracy. This done, the work is further carried out and enriched by chain and other stitches. The result is perfectly smooth flat work, no easy feat when done on a large scale, as it often is.

*Darning and running* need no further explanation. The former stitch is familiar to us in the well known Creton and Turkish cloths. The stitch here is used mechanically in parallel lines, and simulates weaving, so that these handsome borders in a deep, rich red might as well have come from the loom as from the needle. Another method of darning is looser and coarser, and suitable only for cloths and hangings not subject to much wear and rubbing; the stitches follow the curves of the design, which the needle *paints*, as it were, shading and blending the colors. It is necessary to use this facility for shading temperately, however, or the flatness necessary to decorative work is lost.

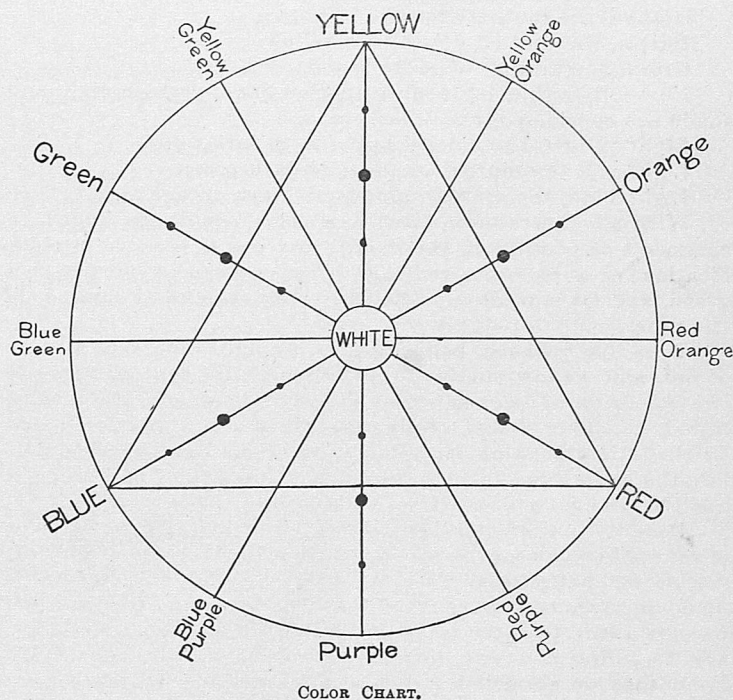
The foregoing is a rough list of stitches which could be copiously supplemented, but that I am obliged to pass on to another important point, that of *design*. If needlework is to be looked upon seriously, it is necessary to secure appropriate and practicable designs. Where the worker does not invent for herself, she should at least interpret her designer, just as the designer interprets and does not attempt to imitate nature. It follows from this, that it is better to avoid the designs of artists who know nothing of the capacities of needlework, and design beautiful and intricate forms without reference to the execution, the result being unsatisfactory and incomplete. Regarding the design itself, broad bold lines should be chosen, and broad, harmonious color (which should be roughly planned before starting work), with as much minute work, and stitches introducing play of color, as befits the purpose of the work and humor of the worker; there should be no scratching, no indefiniteness of form or color, no vagueness that allows the eye to puzzle over the design—beyond that indefinable sense of mystery which arrests the attention and *withholds* the full charm of the work for a moment, to unfold it to those who stop to give it more than a glance. But there are so many different stitches and different modes of setting to work, that it will soon be seen that these few hints do not apply to all of them. One method, for instance, consists of trusting entirely to design, and leaves color out of account; white work on white linen, white on dark ground, or black or dark blue upon white. Again some work depends more on magnificence of color than on form, as for example, the handsome Italian hangings of the seventeenth century, worked in floss silk, on linen sometimes, and sometimes on a dusky open canvas that makes the silks glow and gleam like jewels or stones.

## COLOR CHART.

THE points of the triangle show the three great primaries from which all other colors are produced. Diametrically opposite these are placed their perfect contrasting colors. The points on the circle situated midway between the primary and secondary colors show the middle tones, or half colors, with their true contrasts directly opposite. To better show the use of the chart, we will take the upper point, yellow; in opposition to it we find purple, its contrast, and the same with the other primaries. The half-way color, between the primary yellow and the secondary orange, which is yellow-orange, finds its perfect contrast on the opposite side of the circle, which is blue-purple, and so on all round the circle.

To show the use of the chart as a determiner of harmony we will take as an example purple. The dots marked on the line towards the center, white, denote the various tones of purple produced by its admixture with white; any of these tones form a harmony with pure purple. Moving along the circle on each side of the purple, we find its harmonies decreasing as we leave it, until we reach its most imperfect tones, blue-green and red-orange. Continuing the round of the circle we approach its contrasting colors, gradually getting more pleasing until we reach its perfect contrast in the primary yellow.

A study of this chart will greatly assist the decorator in the grouping of colors, and it will be useful if kept as a reference.



## COLOR EFFECTS IN DRY GOODS.

BY ALEXANDER D. GRANT.



THE color-effect of color upon its surroundings can be so easily known that no intelligent dry goods clerk should be ignorant of the subject. How often do we hear a customer say, "Oh, I want something clearer in the color than you have shown me; either the light is poor or the colors are dull. I will look a little further." And a sale is lost because the salesman did not have somewhere

in sight the mutual opposite of the color shown.

There are only six distinct colors to consider, yellow, red, blue, orange, purple and green. All other conditions of color are modifications of these, either by admixture with each other, with light or shade, or by admixture with each other and also with light or shade.

In this article we will confine ourselves purely to the color effect of color upon its surroundings.

Place a disc of any bright color upon a white or light gray ground, and let the eye rest upon the disc of color for thirty or sixty seconds, moving the eye a little off and on from the disc of color. It will soon be observed that a phantom color seems to float as a colored atmosphere over the surroundings of the colored disc looked at.

Or, take a piece of plain black goods, say cashmere; lay it flat upon the counter; place upon it a sample of bright orange color. After looking steadily at the orange sample for a minute or half a minute, it will be observed that the black cashmere is a blue black. Take away the orange color and substitute for it a bright blue. Now let the eye rest steadily upon the blue, and the black cashmere will soon seem not a blue black, but a brown black; or take several pieces of some bright red fabric—the case frequently occurs in showing red flannels—after a few minutes